

The Report Card on Improving Education: Promises Made...Promises Kept

In the four years before Haley Barbour became Governor:

- There was a lack of focus on lifelong learning. K-12 spending increased, but at the expense of community colleges and universities.

During the Musgrove Administration, the community colleges' budget was cut \$32 million (16%) and the universities budget was cut \$45 million (7%).

- Politicians' commitment to education was only measured by how much money they were willing to spend. Increasing funding is important, but we also have to get better results for the money we spend. The discussion of how to improve our public schools was focused just on money; not fundamentals.

Haley's Plan: Improve Education

- The Legislature overwhelmingly approved the proposals first set out in “Haley’s Plan” and refined through a collaborative, participatory process which included more than 250 classroom teachers to focus on the fundamentals of improving student achievement. The result was the “UpGrade” Education reform package.
- The Legislature approved Haley’s plan to encourage innovation at the local level by granting “Home Rule” to all districts and liberating successful schools from State Department of Education paperwork.
- The Legislature approved most of Haley’s plan to recruit and retain teachers by allowing automatic certification of any teacher meeting federal No Child Left Behind “highly qualified teacher” definition; authorizing a plan to pay teachers based on performance; authorizing higher pay for teachers in hard to staff subjects and districts; and expanding alternative certification programs.

- The Legislature approved part of Haley's plan to UpGrade school discipline by authorizing financial rewards for teachers who serve as mentors to other middle school teachers.

The Legislature approved Haley's plan to redesign our high schools by creating the Mississippi Virtual Public school; expanding dual credit and dual enrollment programs; and requiring access to AP courses.

- The Legislature approved the plan to UpGrade how we use our resources by making the education budget process more uniform and transparent so taxpayers can see how our education dollars are spent and by authorizing the privatization of certain school budget functions.
- Governor Barbour worked with the Legislature to set a focus on Mississippi's unacceptably high dropout rate by creating an Associate State Superintendent level position for dropout prevention.

- To improve early childhood education, Haley directed the Department of Human Services to implement a “quality rating system” that incentivizes private childcare providers to provide educational content in their programs. DHS will begin implementing this system this summer.

The Results of Haley’s Plan?

**We are providing more resources
while seeking better results for the money we spend.**

- In the upcoming school year, for the first time, local school leaders will be free to make innovative decisions about how to run their schools without checking with officials in Jackson first.
- In the upcoming school year, for the first time, every student will have the opportunity to earn college credit in high school.
- For the first time, Mississippi is honestly acknowledging our 40% dropout rate and is implementing plans to address it.

- For the first time, the state will direct resources through private child care providers to ensure that our children are ready to learn by kindergarten.
- In the upcoming 2006-2007 school year, teachers will be making an average of 30% more than they were six years ago, after two consecutive 8% increases in teacher pay during the Barbour Administration.
- In the upcoming 2006-2007 school year, per student spending in our public schools will be approximately \$7800, a 22% increase during the Barbour Administration. Since Haley has been Governor, state support for our K-12 school districts through the Mississippi Adequate Education Program has increased \$323 million, or 19%.

Under Governor Barbour's leadership, the Legislature restored the funding cuts our universities and communities suffered during the Musgrove Administration. Support for Community Colleges has increased \$50 million, or 29%, including a doubling of state support for workforce training. Support for universities has increased \$93 million, or 16%.